

## Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 AF-10 AID-20 OMB-01 H-03 SS-20 NSC-10 IO-14

ACDA-19 EB-11 DRC-01 /190 W  
----- 021153

R 170945Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5083

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

CINCEUR

CINUSNAVEUR

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX SEVEN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 2475

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, MY,LY, IS

SUBJ: FOLLOW-UP ON ISRAELI PATROL BOAT INCIDENT

REF: VALLETTA 2384

1. AT LUNCH DECEMBER 15, ITALIAN AMBASSADOR MASSA  
BERNUCCI PROVIDED HIS NATO-COUNTRY COLLEAGUES SOME  
ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND TO RECENT MINTOFF ROW WITH  
ISRAEL OVER PATROL CRAFT INCIDENT. MASSA BERNUCCI  
CLAIMS THAT MINTOFF ORIGINALLY WANTED TO BREAK  
RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, BUT WAS RESTRAINED BY SOMEONE  
IN HIS CABINET, POSSIBLY ALBERT HYZLER. LATTE'S  
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AGRUMENT WAS THAT A MORE CAREFUL EXAMINATION SHOULD BE MADE OF THE EFFECTS OF SUCH ACTION ON MALTA'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION.

2. MASSA BERNUCCI ADDED THAT MINTOFF INTENDED TO FOLLOW BREAK WITH SIRAEI WITH SIGNATURE OF A MUTUAL DEFENSE PACT WITH LIBYA. THIS IDEA RESULTED FROM MINTOFF'S APPRECIATION OF MALTA'S MILITARY WEAKNESS WHEN HE WAS UNABLE TO MUSTER ANY MILITARY MUSCLE WHEN ISRAELI BOATS WERE DISCOVERED IN MALTESE WATERS, HOWEVER, WITHOUT BEING EXPLICIT, MASSA BERNUCCI INDICATED THAT HE HAD HEARD THIS POINT DIRECTLY FROM MINTOFF, AND THAT IT HAD PROBABLY NOT BEEN RAISED IN CABINET MEETING.

3. COMMENT: THE THOUGHT THAT MINTOFF WOULD TURN TO LIBYA RATHER THAN NATO OR UK FOR DEFENSE PACT IS CURIOUS. EVEN MINTOFF'S LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF FACTS OF MILITARY POWER SHOULD REVEAL TO HIM THAT LIBYA'S ABILITY TO PROJECT HE STRENGTH AS FAR AS MALTA IS EXTREMELY LIMITED. WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT MINTOFF WAS INDULGINGIN ONE OF HIS FAVORITE GAMES--TRYING TO FRIGHTEN THE ITALIANS. A DEFENSE PACT WITH LIBYA WOULD FIND FEC SUPPORTERS IN MALTA.

4. THE ILL WIND OF THE NATIONAL BANK BLOW-UP HAS APPARENTLY BLOWN SOME GOOD BY DISTRACTING MINTOFF AND GOM FROM PATROL BOAT INCIDENT. THE SECOND ISRAELI NOTE WAS DELIVERED DECEMBER 7, JUST AS THE BANK CRISIS WAS REACHING IT PEAK. (THE MESSAGE ACCORDING TO BOTH ISRAELI AMBASSADOR AND HIS DEPUTY, WAS VERY CONCILIATORY.) SINCE THEN GOM HAS BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH A DAMAGE LIMITING EXERCISE, ANDTHE IERAELI PROBLEM HAS BEEN PUSHED ASIDE. WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, THE PROSPECT THAT IT WILL BE BURIED SEEMS TO IMPROVE.

5. THEUNHAPPY ASPECT OF THE ISSUE IS THAT THE ISRAELI BOATS WERE WELL WITHIN THEIR RIGHTS IN SEEKING SHELTER, EVEN IF IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN COURTEOUS TO COMMUNICATE THEIR SITUATION TO THE GOM UPON ENTERING TERRITORIAL WATERS.TUCKER  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TERRITORIAL WATERS, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS INTERRUPTION, MILITARY AGREEMENTS, NAVAL SHIPS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 DEC 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** hilburpw  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Reference:** VALLETTA 2384  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** hilburpw  
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**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 20 SEP 2001  
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**Review History:** RELEASED <20-Sep-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <15-Oct-2001 by hilburpw>  
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30 JUN 2005

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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FOLLOW-UP ON ISRAELI PATROL BOAT INCIDENT  
**TAGS:** PFOR, MOPS, MT, LY, IS, IT  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005